

General Policies

Scholastic Standards

To be in academic good standing and to receive a graduate degree, a student must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0.

All courses taken by a graduate student for which grades are given will be used in calculating the GPA, except when a course has been repeated. Both grades will appear on the transcript, but only the second grade will be used in calculating the GPA. A specific course can be retaken only once, and only three total courses can be retaken. Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory is assigned for research credits, and they are not used in calculating the GPA.

In fulfilling graduate course requirements on any plan of study, only grades of A, B, or C are acceptable. For master's paper (797), master's thesis (798), and doctoral dissertation (799/899), only the grade of satisfactory (S) is acceptable. For seminar (790/890), case studies (792/892), individual study/tutorial (793/893), practicum/internship (794/894), or field experience (795/895), only grades of A, B, C, or S are acceptable for graduate credit.

Programs and/or supervisory committees may require a higher performance than C in certain courses. While some courses may be used for graduate credit with a grade of C, courses with grades of D, F, or U may not be used for graduate credit. Acquisition of more than two grades of C, D, F or U may be grounds for dismissal upon recommendation by the program administrator.

These minimal scholastic requirements apply to each student enrolled in the Graduate College. Additional requirements may exist for certain graduate programs.

Academic Warning

Any student in GOOD STANDING whose cumulative GPA drops to less than 3.0 at any time of attendance is automatically placed on academic WARNING. Any student admitted in CONDITIONAL status because of grade deficiency is automatically placed on academic WARNING. A student on academic WARNING cannot register for the following semester until the grades for the current semester post.

If a student on academic WARNING fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in the subsequent semester of attendance, then the student will be placed on academic PROBATION.

Academic Probation

A student on academic PROBATION may not continue the pursuit of a graduate degree program without a recommendation from the appropriate program administrator and a waiver from the Dean of the Graduate College. This recommendation must include a review of the student's current status and a proposed plan of remediation which provides the student an opportunity to return to a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 within one additional semester (fall or spring). The remediation plan must be submitted and approved in time for the student to register for the academic term (fall or spring) that immediately follows the term in which the student was placed on probation. If the student does not submit an acceptable plan in time to enroll for the next academic term (fall or spring), or if the cumulative GPA is not at least 3.0 after this one additional semester, the student will be dismissed from his or her graduate program.

A student on academic PROBATION is not eligible for a graduate assistantship or tuition waiver.

Dismissal from the Graduate College

Graduate students may be suspended or dismissed from NDSU as a result of failure to meet our scholastic standards, academic or professional misconduct, insufficient progress toward a degree, or failure to meet professional expectations or standards. Students suspended or dismissed from the Graduate College are not eligible for admission into any degree-granting or certificate program or into non-degree status for a period of at least one calendar year from the date of their suspension or dismissal.

Suspension or dismissal does not become complete until the completion of any appeal process (<http://bulletin.ndsu.edu/past-bulletin-archive/2015-16/graduate/graduate-school-policies/graduate-student-appeals>) .

Graduate Courses

Courses approved at the 600, 700 and 800 level may be taken for graduate credit and used to satisfy course requirements on the student's graduate plan of study.

Didactic courses are those courses approved for graduate credit numbered 601-689, 691; 700-789,791; 800-889, 891. Courses numbered 690, 692-699, 790, 792-799, 890, 892-899 are considered special or experimental courses and are not to be included as didactic courses on a plan of study.

Courses that a student has used to fulfill the requirements of a baccalaureate degree may not be used on that student's graduate plan of study.

Continuing Education Graduate Courses

Graduate courses administered through the Office of Distance and Continuing Education (DCE) (<http://www.ndsu.edu/dce>) are eligible for graduate degree plans of study if they carry a permanent course number, or the 691/791/891 or 696/796/896 designation. Courses numbered 691/791/891 are trial courses, and course numbered 696/796/896 are special topic courses; courses 691/791/891 are viewed as didactic courses. The 696/796/896 courses can be counted as didactic courses if they are later approved as permanent courses. Courses designed for professional advancement are given the number 600. Although such courses are considered graduate level, they cannot be included on NDSU graduate degree plans of study.

Graduate tuition waivers do not cover DCE courses.

Course instructors must be full or associate members of the NDSU graduate faculty or approved in advance by the administrator of the unit whose course prefix is used, the appropriate academic dean, and the Graduate Dean.

Registration for Research Credit

A student conducting research for the disquisition is to be enrolled in 797, 798, 799 or 899 for the number of credits specified on the plan of study. Such registration is required even in absentia when faculty and/or administration time is consumed in manuscript review, communication, and other forms of assistance.

Enrollment Status

Nine credits are considered a full-time graduate load. To receive financial aid, students must be enrolled at least half-time (i.e. 5 credits). Loan deferment may also require full- or half-time status. Eligibility varies with financial aid programs; students should contact their lender for requirements.

Graduate Assistants working 20 hours per week are considered full-time if registered for five or more graduate credits. Federal law requires all international students with a 20-hour per week assistantship to carry at least six graduate credits for full-time status. Graduate students wishing to register for more than 15 credits in a regular semester shall secure the approval of their department chair and the Dean of the Graduate College.

Time Limitations

Graduate credit for any course work that is more than seven (7) calendar years old at the time of the final examination cannot be used to satisfy a master's degree program. The analogous time limitation for a doctoral degree is 10 years.

Following the final examination, the candidate has one (1) year during which to provide the Graduate College a disquisition for which the graduate dean will sign final approval of all requirements for the degree. Should the disquisition not be deposited as specified or any other degree requirements not be completed within this time limit, the student must repeat the final examination.

Continuous Enrollment

Students are required to register for at least one credit each semester (fall and spring) until all degree requirements are completed, including submitting the final copy of a thesis, paper, or dissertation. The graduate dean will not approve the degree until the student has registered for the number of credits of research for any semesters not covered by either registration or leave of absence, but not more than four (4) credits total.

A student who has not registered for longer than a continuous two-year period must also reapply for admission and is subject to the degree requirements at the time of readmission.

Leave of Absence

Students who interrupt their graduate program prior to the completion of all degree requirements must maintain continuous enrollment for the fall and/or spring semesters of the absence or obtain a leave of absence, using the Request for Leave of Absence from Graduate Studies form (http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/gradschool.ndsu.edu/Forms/Student_Forms/Leave_of_Absence.pdf).

NOTE: Leaves of absence do not amend in any way the seven and ten-year time limitations.

Family and Medical Accommodation Policy for Graduate Students

The Graduate School at NDSU is committed to promoting an environment where students can successfully balance their academic and family responsibilities. The goal of this policy is to provide consistent, equitable treatment to all graduate students, regardless of family status, by providing timeline extensions for completing preliminary/qualifying examinations and by offering modified duties to students experiencing a serious health condition or needing to provide care to a new child or a seriously ill family member.

1. Extensions for Completing Preliminary/Qualifying Examinations, Final Examinations, and/or Disquisitions

Eligibility:

A graduate student is eligible to apply for a time extension on completing preliminary/qualifying examination, final examination, and/or disquisition upon a showing that they are:

1. In good academic standing and making progress toward degree completion, and
2. Undergoing childbirth, caring for their newborn, caring for their child with a serious medical condition, adopting a child, accepting foster placement of a child, experiencing their own serious medical condition, or experiencing a serious medical condition of a spouse/partner or parent for which they have caretaker responsibilities (medical certification may be required).

Length of Extensions:

While each extension granted under this policy will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, absent extraordinary circumstances, the additional time granted by this policy will not exceed two years.

A graduate student undergoing childbirth, adopting a child, or accepting foster placement of a child shall be entitled to receive an extension of up to one extra year for completing preliminary/qualifying examination, final examination, and/or submitting a disquisition.

A graduate student experiencing their own serious medical condition, caring for their child with a serious medical condition, or experiencing a serious medical condition of a spouse/partner or parent for which they have caretaker responsibilities shall be entitled to receive an extension of up to six extra months for completing a preliminary/qualifying examination, a final examination, and/or submitting a disquisition.

Application/Approval Process:

Graduate students who wish to obtain an extension under this policy must document their eligibility in writing to their academic unit prior to the effective date of the extension – retroactive requests will not be considered, absent extraordinary circumstances. The student's academic unit and the Graduate School will then assess the student's eligibility and approve/deny the extension. Additionally, international students on a visa must have their extension approved by the Office of International Programs.

Leave of Absence

Students requesting an extension may also choose to take a leave of absence from their graduate program. International students will need to consult with the Office of International Student and Study Abroad Services to determine if they are eligible for a leave of absence.

2. Modified Duties for Graduate Assistants

Eligibility:

A graduate assistant is eligible for "modified duties" if the graduate assistant:

1. Becomes a parent through childbirth, adoption, or foster placement of a child;
2. Has a health condition that makes him or her unable to perform regular duties but does not necessitate a reduction in workload; or
3. Will be caring for a child, spouse/partner or parent who has a serious health condition.
4. Must have served as a graduate assistant for at least one academic term.

Definition and Length of Modified Duties:

"Modified duties" means a change to duties and goals without reduction of stipend for a limited period of time. A graduate assistant taking modified duties will still be at a 100% workload and 100% stipend; however, the nature of the responsibilities for this time period will be adjusted. Modified duties will include a revision of workload for up to the equivalent of a semester. If warranted and supported by appropriate medical documentation, graduate students can be excused from most, if not all, of their regular duties for up to six weeks without a reduction in pay. All eligible students will be granted a Parental Accommodation period for up to six weeks immediately following the birth of a child or the adoption of a child under the age of 6 for which the student has parental responsibilities. (Additional time may be granted based on medical documentation of exceptional medical circumstances experienced by the student or his/her child, spouse, partner, or dependent parent.)

Regardless of circumstances, modified duties agreements must conclude within 12 months.

Application/Approval Process

A graduate assistant requesting modified duties shall document their request in writing to their supervisor and department chair/head. The graduate assistant and the department will engage in an interactive process to determine how the graduate assistant's duties will be modified and the duration of the modified duties. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached between the graduate assistant and the department, the Dean of the Graduate School shall assist in reaching an agreement. To ensure that all parties are operating under the same understanding, the agreement for modified duties shall be put in writing. Graduate assistants accepting modified duties are subject to the regular evaluation procedures used in the program; however, such evaluations shall be based on the agreed upon modified duties.